



New Fort McHenry visitors center planned

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[Fort McHenry](#) National Monument and Historic Shrine will break ground Monday on a visitors center that will commemorate the bicentennial of the War of 1812.

The new building will open in the fall of 2010 and replace the existing facility, which opened in 1966 and was built to accommodate 250,000 visitors a year. Fort McHenry officials said they now host about 600,000 visitors a year.

Congress allocated more than \$11 million in 2005 for the construction of the facility at Fort McHenry, which is a national park. The city and state also combined to contribute about \$3 million for the project.

Park officials said the building will have red brick and polished metal like the white stripes of [the U.S. flag](#). [Gov. Martin O'Malley](#), [Sen. Benjamin L. Cardin](#), [Rep. John Sarbanes](#) and [Mayor Sheila Dixon](#) are expected to attend the ceremony.

During the War of 1812, the fort defended Baltimore harbor and stopped a British advance into the city. The battle inspired Francis Scott Key to write the poem that became the national anthem.

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